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RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 0345
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 6705
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 6776
RUEHGH/AMCONSUL SHANGHAI 1324
RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG 5096
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI 4054
RUEHGP/AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE 7268
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1570
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 2882
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1960
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SUBJECT: SEOUL - PRESS BULLETIN; September 29, 2009

TOP HEADLINES

Chosun Ilbo, Seoul Shinmun, All TVs
National Assembly Approves New Prime Minister; Approval Comes
despite Nominee's Skepticism over Sejong City Project

JoongAng Ilbo
Newly Discovered German Diplomatic Letter Supported
Korea's Liberation from Japan's Annexation

Dong-a Ilbo
Chung Un-chan Confirmed as Prime Minister
despite Opposition Boycott

Hankook Ilbo, Hankyoreh Shinmun, Segye Ilbo
2010 Budget Rises 2.5 Percent to 291.8 Trillion Won

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

According to the Blue House, the leaders of the ROK, China and Japan
will meet in Beijing on Oct. 10 to discuss pending issues, including
President Lee Myung-bak's "grand bargain" proposal on North Korea's
nuclear issue. (All)

A senior Foreign Ministry official said yesterday that the core of
President Lee's "grand bargain" with North Korea is to advance the
dismantlement of the North's nuclear weapons and materials.
(JoongAng)

Blue House Spokesman Park Sun-kyoo, in a Sept. 28 press briefing,
said that Seoul is not considering any massive food or fertilizer
aid to North Korea at this point in time. (Chosun, JoongAng,
Hankook, Hankyoreh, Segye, Seoul)

U.S. Ambassador Kathleen Stephens will hold a concert on Sept. 30 to
mark the Chuseok holiday, Korea's Thanksgiving. (Chosun)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

There is speculation that North Korean leader Kim Jong-il may make an announcement during Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's Oct. 4-6 visit to Pyongyang that could provide major momentum to resuming the stalled nuclear negotiations. (Chosun, KBS)

MEDIA ANALYSIS

-N. Korea

Conservative Chosun Ilbo carried an inside-page report speculating that North Korean leader Kim Jong-il may make an announcement during Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's Oct. 4-6 visit to Pyongyang that could provide major momentum to resuming the stalled nuclear negotiations.

The report noted that the North Korean leader told visiting Chinese State Councilor Dai Bingguo on Sept. 18 that his country is willing to engage in bilateral and multilateral talks to resolve its nuclear issue. The report quoted an ROKG source as saying: "North Korea will have to give a visiting senior Chinese leader some kind of gift. Leader Kim Jong-il is apparently under heavy pressure from Wen's upcoming visit, especially given that Wen cancelled a visit to the North in the wake of its second nuclear test on May 25."

State-run KBS filed a similar report.

All ROK media reported on the Blue House's announcement yesterday that the leaders of the ROK, China and Japan will meet in Beijing on

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Oct. 10 to discuss pending issues, including President Lee Myung-bak's "grand bargain" proposal on North Korea's nuclear issue. (All)

Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo quoted a senior Foreign Ministry official as saying yesterday that the core of President Lee's "grand bargain" with North Korea is to advance the dismantlement of the North's nuclear weapons and materials. He went on to say: "There is no alternative to the dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear program."

Iran Nuclear Confrontation

Right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo wrote in the headline: "N. Korea Being Used as a Benchmark for Nuclear Tug-of-War between the U.S. and Iran." The sub-heads read: "Iran Discloses New Nuclear Facility Ahead of Next Month's Negotiations, a Move that Resembles N. Korea's 'Brinkmanship Tactics' to Gain the Upper Hand Ahead of Negotiations with U.S.;" and "U.S. Portrays Iran's Provocation as Deceiving the World to Draw China and Russia into International Sanctions against Iran, a Strategy Akin to the One Washington Used for International Sanctions to Get N. Korea to Return to Dialogue."

FEATURES

KIM JONG-IL TO MEET CHINESE PREMIER IN EARLY OCTOBER
(Chosun Ilbo, September 29, 2009, Page 5)

By Reporter Lim Min-hyuk

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao will visit North Korea on Oct. 4-6, raising expectations that Pyongyang will take the opportunity to announce its return to Six-Party nuclear talks.

During a visit from Chinese State Councilor Dai Bingguo, an envoy for President Hu Jintao, on Sept. 18, North Korean leader Kim Jong-il said he was "willing to engage in bilateral and multilateral talks" on the nuclear program. Speculation has it that Wen, as the senior official, can expect a more specific commitment.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency gave unprecedented advance coverage to Wen's visit on Monday, saying it comes "in time for a ceremony on Oct. 6 to mark the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries." Speculation is already mounting in Beijing that "Kim Jong-il might express willingness to

dismantle nuclear programs and present specific ways to do so."

A South Korean government source on Monday said, "North Korea will have to give a visiting senior Chinese leader some kind of gift. Leader Kim Jong-il is apparently under heavy pressure from Wen's upcoming visit, especially given that Wen cancelled a visit to the North in the wake of its second nuclear test on May 25."

The fact that Washington accepted (the proposal for) bilateral dialogue with Pyongyang but did not specify a detailed schedule (for the talks) is expected to serve as a catalyst for Kim Jong-il to open his mouth. An ROKG official noted, "During Wen's visit, if Kim Jong-il shows, through his comments, a different attitude regarding the resumption of the Six-Party Talks, it will smooth the way for the U.S." In that case, observers say, a visit to Pyongyang by U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Stephen Bosworth may soon be realized.

Already aware of such a possibility, the Six-Party nations are working to coordinate their stances. Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg is making a tour of the ROK, China, and Japan from September 27 to October 1 to discuss the timing and conditions for U.S.-North Korea dialogue and the goal of a two-track strategy of pursuing dialogue as well as sanctions against the North.

On September 28, diplomatic officials from the ROK, China and Japan discussed ways to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue in Shanghai, China. Observers say that there is a high possibility

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that Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao may bring up issues he will discuss with Kim Jong-il (during his upcoming visit to Pyongyang) at a trilateral summit, which will take place in Beijing on October 10.

ROK authorities say that even if Kim Jong-il makes any forward-looking announcement, this will not steer the North Korean nuclear process in a direction he wants unless the North demonstrates its trustworthiness. A senior ROK official noted that in order to prevent Pyongyang from capitalizing on the ROK's trust (in the North), sanctions should remain in place through international coordination even if (U.S.-North Korea) talks may be held.

(We have compared the English version on the website with the Korean version and added the latter half to make them identical.)

STEPHENS